286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

285 Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather [284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

285 The art of basketry, however, is exercised primarily to produce woven containers. These serve many purposes and come in all shapes and sizes from large wicker containers used to protect chicks against birds of prey and small wicker baskets for collecting refuse to baskets of plaited grass for carrying millet, rice, and most other goods. Some baskets are made with greater care, decorated with designs made by mixing dyed grasses and thin leather strips and edged with cowries.

[462] Only the men do basketry, and only they work with leather; some
281 of them make leather objects which are almost artistic and very well sewn. Unfortunately the natives do not know how to tan skins properly, and their leather has no strength. The hide is simply stretched out and dried by the sun; sometimes it is briefly immersed in water containing tamarind bark. The hair is removed by pouring hot water onto the skin and then scraping it off with a knife. To make it softer, the skin is moved back and forth over a stake planted in the ground and slightly sharpened at the tip, or it is simply crumpled /57/ between the hands. When it has been softened, it is stretched once more to dry in the sun, held with small wooden pegs driven into the [386] ground. It may be dyed red, green, or black with special herbs.

Some men make knife or saber sheaths; others specialize in the long gaiters which are tied to the belt and worn by every horseman in full regalia; still others make saddle rugs stuffed with kapok or cotton and decorated with designs. They also make the various parts of the harness: the leather strip which runs across the horse's chest, and the
294 large rug which covers its rump. Leather is also used to make all kinds
281 of footgear, from the mere piece of hide held to the feet by leather strips running between the big and second toes and all round the foot, to the Turkish-type slipper and the ornamented boots with spurs attached which are a natural complement to the long gaiters. Some of the shoemakers are truly skillful and could make quite satisfactory shoes if they had lasts and especially if they had better leather.

281 Hide is also used in the manufacture of belts adorned with cowries, pouches, amulets, bags which are sometimes nicely adorned, etc. The designs are usually made as follows: small leather strips of various colors are sewn onto a skin of solid color which serves as a base; more rarely, as in Morocco, the top layer of skin is removed.

462 The above-mentioned industries are performed exclusively by men, and any male individual may practice them. The preparation of gun powder and tobacco is also male work. The industries listed below,

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[472] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey; or, when the man carries them himself, they are [285] folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

500 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

222 top of the trunk, and they are deeply indented. The trunk never
137 bears leaves except when it is young. The dark green of the leaves and their toughness makes /sic/ them look from afar like the artificial zinc leaves of some theatrical backdrops or weather vanes. The youngest leaves at the top are strongly imbricated and ensheathed, and ivory white in color. They are very tender and yield palm cabbage. The leaves of the rônier only fall off when completely dry.

"The fruits, which are called rône, come in clusters of about forty or fifty. They are the size of a medium-sized melon and very heavy. Their covering is green when they are young, orange-yellow when they are ripe. The large seeds, which are blackish and disc-shaped, or like spheres flattened at the poles, are surrounded with a fibrous, gold-yellow meat which is very watery and very fragrant.
[261] Its taste is pleasant, although slightly tinged with turpentine. The natives eat large quantities of it, especially in times of scarcity.

313 "Rônier wood is dense, long lasting, and remarkably tough.
137 502/ Immune to insects and humidity, it is excellently suited to the manufacture of piles, and often used in the construction of bridges and wharves. The male trees alone are used. The female trees can only be used for fencing, for they are hollow and lacking in strength....

222 "In addition to the fruit, the Blacks also eat the roots of the
137 young shoots, the taste of which is slightly astringent and rather un-
262 pleasant. They are eaten raw. The terminal buds of the palms are very tender. They are palm cabbages, less tasty to be sure than those of Oreodoxa oleracea, but nevertheless deserving of recognition. When cut into small pieces 2 centimeters square and well seasoned with oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, they make a very good salad, especially if they were previously soaked for twenty-four hours. This dish is highly prized by Europeans who live in the Sudan. Finally,
[263] the rônier yields a fairly abundant sap from which sugar might be
273 extracted. When fermented, it produces a palm wine of inferior quality."

137 It must be added that the fibers of the rônier leaves are also
[285] utilized. The West African Blacks use them to make baskets (as for example in Mossi territory) or cords (as for instance in Upper Gambia).

322 salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and [435] large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285 314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285 435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw- yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

285 435 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 294 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, à Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 285 294 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also immersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

285 294 The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats, which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

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294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used
294 along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 294 241 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones